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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the self-concept of 37 Cambodian children who have recently resettled in Richmond (Virginia) after experiencing war, turmoil, and refugee camp life in Southeast Asia. The study group consisted of 19 Cambodian males and 17 Cambodian females, whose ages ranged from 5 to 14 years. About 17 percent of the respondents were in kindergarten; 39 percent were in grade 1; 11 percent were in grade 2, and the remaining 33 percent were in grade 3 or above. Each was administered the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (PHCSCS), comprised of cluster scales assessing self-concept in the following areas: (1) Behavior; (2) Intellectual and School Status; (3) Physical Appearance and Attributes; (4) Anxiety; (5) Popularity; and (6) Happiness and Satisfaction. The PHCSCS was translated into Khmer, the Cambodian language, to compensate for difficulty in understanding English. Analysis of PHCSCS scores resulted in the following summary conclusions: (1) the self-concept scores of the respondents were a little low when compared with the normative sample included in the PHCSCS manual; (2) the respondents scored lower on the Popularity cluster than the black children studied by Oanh and Michael (1977), and lower in the Behavior cluster than the non-Vietnamese Asian children in the same study; and (3) relationships between self-concept and demographic characteristics were statistically weak. Statistical data are included on four tables. A 14-item list of references is included. (FMW)

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A Study of Self-Concept of Cambodian Children in Two Richmond Public Schools

Abstract

This study investigated the self-concept of Cambodian children who have recently resettled in Richmond, Virginia after experiences of war, turmoil, and refugee camp life in Southeast Asia. The scores of the children on the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale were found to be rather low, especially in the clusters of Anxiety, Popularity, and Happiness and Satisfaction. Such findings should serve as warning signals to those who work with the Cambodian children and their families that something is amiss. It is also suggested that the diagnostic use of achievement tests with these children, who have never been tested before, may be helpful in assessing their strengths and weaknesses and in monitoring their scholastic progress.

A Study of Self-Concept of Cambodian Children in Two Richmond Public Schools[1]

Introduction

As a component of a Cambodian refugee needs assessment in a predominantly Cambodian community in south Richmond, Virginia, this study is an exploratory investigation of the younger generation, specifically, children in primary grades, with a special focus on their self-concept.

LaBenne and Greene (1969) defined self-concept as a person's "total appraisal of his appearance, background and origins, abilities and resources, attitudes and feelings which culminates as a directing force in behavior." This definition suggests that the interest in studying a person's self-concept may be attributed to the direct influence of self-concept on the person's actions, performance, and the choice of models of behavior (Cronbach, 1963). Self-concept theorists believe that the knowledge of a person's perceptions of self in relation to his/her environment is essential in the understanding of what guides and controls his/her actions and behavior (Wylie, 1961).

Since self-concept is developed through interactions with the 'significant other', parental role and behavior are especially important in the early development of the self-concept of a child, and through interactions with the parents,

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cultural attributes are transmitted (LaBenne & Greene, 1969; Wylie, 1961). Indeed, cultural influences on the self-concept of children have been reported in several studies (Chang, 1975; Oanh and Michael, 1977; Pang, 1981).

Chang (1975) used the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (PHCSCS) to quantify the self-concept of two groups of children in Grade 3 through Grade 6. The results indicated that there were significant differences between the Black (n = 144) and Korean (n = 151) American children on their self-concept. In general, the Korean American children showed a comparatively higher self-concept as indicated by higher total scores. While the Black American children felt more comfortable about their physical appearance and their popularity, the Korean American children showed higher self-esteem in three other areas: behavior, intellectual and school status, and happiness and satisfaction. It was suggested that parental attitudes toward school and academic achievement might explain part of the findings.

The self-concept of six different groups of children in Grades 4 and 6 was compared in Oanh and Michael (1977): Caucasian (n = 30), Negro (n = 18), Mexican-American (n = 30), Asian (n = 46), Vietnamese (n = 26) and others (n = 29), again using the PHCSCS. The results showed that the Vietnamese children in the study reported the lowest self-concept on physical appearance, and this was suggested to have reflected a general attitude of reservation and modesty characteristic of the Oriental culture.

Pang (1981) studied two groups of children in Grades 4, 5 and 6: White American (n = 47) and Japanese American (n = 29), focusing especially on their perception of their physical appearances and attributes. A modified version of the PHCSCS with nine additional items about physical self-concept was administered. All three scales: the PHCSCS, the additional nine items, and the combined version, indicated that, in comparison, the White American children had a higher self-esteem on their physical appearances and attributes than the Japanese American Children.

The interest in studying the self-concept of children in a specific learning situation may have originated from the hypothesis that a person's conception of his/her own ability to learn affects his/her learning behavior and performance in school. Brookover and Thomas (1964) studied 1,050 non-Black Seventh Graders in an urban school system, and found a significant and positive correlation between self-concept and academic performance; the relationship held even when measured IQ was controlled. Similar findings were reported in Caplin (1969), where 180 children in intermediate grades from three elementary schools were studied, and those who reported more positive self-concept were found to have higher academic achievement. On the other hand, however, no significant relationship between self-concept and achievement in an academic role was detected in Badwal (1969), Beebe (1972) and Chang (1976).

Purposes of Study

Though some of them might have been born in the United States, the Cambodian children in the target community are distinctly different from their non-Cambodian peers at school. Their families have only recently settled down in the Richmond area after long experiences of war, famine and refugee camp life in Southeast Asia. The impact of such experiences and their cultural background on their self-concept, though paramount in the understanding of their development, learning experience and needs, has never been assessed. This is an exploratory attempt to collect and quantify information about their demographic characteristics and self-esteem.

Specifically, this study intends to:

1) Quantify the self-concept construct of the Cambodian children in the target community, using the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (PHCSCS);

2) Compare their self-concept scores with that of other children of Asian ethnic background, assessed with the use of the same instrument, as reported in Chang (1975) and Oanh and Michael (1977);

3) Compare their self-concept scores with those of their non-Cambodian peers at school;

4) Relate their self-concept scores to their demographic characteristics;

5) Relate their self-concept scores to their academic achievement as indicated by their SRA achievement series scores in reading, mathematics and social studies.

Methodology

Instrument

Self-concept is a psychological construct not directly observable or measurable; it is often inferred from behavior

(LaBenne & Greene, 1969). The major components of a person's self-concept are his/her conscious feeling, and perceptive and cognitive process. In this sense, self-concept can be assessed through the method of conscious self-reporting, though great care has to be exercised in the choice of a valid instrument, and the fallibility of self-report has to be taken into consideration when interpreting the findings (Cronbach, 1963).

The Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (PHCSCS) (Piers, 1984), designed for the assessment of the self-concept of children and adolescents, has been selected for data collection in this study. The questionnaire contains 80 statements pertaining to the way people feel about themselves, and the children are asked to indicate whether each statement applies to them using either a "yes" or "no" response. The sum of positive responses (ranging from 0 to 80) constitutes the total score of the scale, with a high score indicating a positive self-evaluation and a low score indicating a negative self-evaluation. In addition, cluster scales are computed for different sets of items. The six cluster scales are developed to assess self-concept about (1) behavior (BEH) with 16 items; (2) intellectual and school status (INT) with 17 items; (3) physical appearance and attributes (PHY) with 13 items; (4) anxiety (ANX), with 14 items; (5) popularity (POP) with 12 items; and (6) happiness and satisfaction (HAP) with 10 items. Some items are included in more than one cluster scale, so the

sum of the cluster scores does not equal the total score.

The Manual of the PHCSCS (Piers, 1984) reported coefficients of internal consistency ranging from .88 to .93, and test-retest reliability from .42 (with an interval of eight months) to .96 (with an interval of three to four weeks). While correlations with behavior ratings by teachers and peers ranged from -.03 to .64, with a median value of .37, correlations with other measures of self-concept ranged from .32 to .85. Psychologists found the instrument to be sensitive to individual differences (Mitchell, 1985), and its reliability and validity sufficient for research purposes (Buros, 1975).

In addition to reports of satisfactory reliability and validity of the scale, the PHCSCS was chosen for this study also because of the fact that the instrument can be administered by non-psychologist researchers, that it is suitable for research purposes used with children in primary grades, and that its previous use with ethnic groups has been documented in the literature.

Subjects

The experimental group in the study included all Cambodian students who are enrolled in the public elementary schools which service two Cambodian communities in South Richmond, Virginia, and had returned a signed Parental Release Form. An estimation made in mid 1987 showed that there might be about 100 children in the target communities, but

overestimates made by the schools and demographic changes caused by mobility in and out of the communities have drastically reduced the target group to about 50. Among them, 46 were administered the PHCSCS.

During the administration of the instrument, it had been noticed that several younger children were incapable of comprehending and responding to the questions meaningfully. As a result, their responses were discarded from this study, and only the valid data of the remaining 37 children were examined.

The original design of the study included a control group for the comparison of the self-concept of children from different cultural backgrounds. Parental consent was requested for the participation of the non-Cambodian children enrolled in the same schools. Due to time constraints, however, only one school was able to administer the instrument to eight non-Cambodian children who had parental release. As a result, no attempt will be made to compare the self-esteem of Richmond area children of different ethnic backgrounds.

Data Collection

Taking into consideration that the Cambodian children may have difficulties understanding English, the PHCSCS was translated by a native speaker into Khmer, the Cambodian language, and the translation was validated by a second translator. The Cambodian version of the statements was read out in Khmer by a native speaker during the administration of

the instrument.

Copies of the questionnaire and the procedures for its administration as outlined in the PHCSCS Manual were sent to the three teachers of English as a Second Language (ESL) in the two participating schools. These teachers assisted in the data collection process by reading aloud the statements to the children in English, and overseeing order during the instrument administration.

During the administration sessions, the children, both Cambodian and non-Cambodian, were seated at the work tables in the library, each given a pencil and a copy of the questionnaire. The purpose of administering the questionnaire, what they were expected to do, and where and how to mark their responses were briefly explained to the children. After they had indicated that they understood the procedure, the statements in the instrument were read out to them first in English by their ESL teacher, and then in Khmer by the interpreter with whom the Cambodian children were quite familiar. At the end of the session, they were reminded not to leave any question unanswered, or to respond with both "yes" and "no". Then they assembled to go back to their regular classrooms. Each session took about an hour and was attended by two researchers assisting and confirming the procedures. As mentioned earlier, nine children were found giving invalid responses, and their data were therefore excluded from any analysis.

SRA percentile scores in English, Mathematics, and Social Studies were available only for non-Cambodian children. The Principals in both schools were of the opinion that standardized achievement tests, such as the SRA tests, could not provide fair information about the academic achievement of the Cambodian students when most of them still have problems with the English language. As a result, this study will not include any analysis of academic achievement in relation to self-concept.

Information in the valid questionnaires was coded and entered into the computer, and was analyzed using the SPSS-X statistics program.

The Findings

Demographic characteristics of the children

Background information about the respondents in the study will be discussed in this section, where the analyses are based on the data of 37 Cambodian children coming from 28 unique households. Bearing in mind that the unit of analysis for this purpose is the child who has valid PHCSCS scores, and not the household per se, it should be noted that household information reported in this section is neither unique nor representative of the whole target community.

With the exception of one child whose demographic data are not available, the background information of the children is summarized in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here

It is observed in Table 1 that about 17 percent of the respondents were kindergartners, 39 percent were First Graders, and 11 percent Second Graders, while about one-third of them were in Grade 3 or above.

The average age of this group of children was nine years, ranging from five to fourteen years. There is almost an even split on the gender distribution of the children; 19 of them (53%) are male and 17 (47%) are female. Similar proportions are noted for the place of birth; 47 percent of the respondents were born in Cambodia and 53 percent in Thailand, and none in the United States. The significance of this finding is the implication that the children may all have experience of refugee camp life.

In terms of ethnic background, all of them identified themselves as Khmer. While most of them, 92 percent, reported Khmer as their first language spoken at home, a small proportion (8%) had Thai as their first language. This is slightly different from what their household heads[2] did when they were children; none of the household heads spoke Thai as a child, one spoke a Chinese dialect while most of them spoke Khmer. More than half (58%) of the respondents had Chinese kin relations; while 50 percent had distant Chinese relatives,

[2]In several cases where the household composition is not simple single-nucleus, household heads may not be the same as the parents of the children.

three of them (8%) had at least one Chinese grandparent.

Almost half (47%) of the children in the study were the eldest among an average of 3.4 siblings. They were from families of an average size of 5.5 people, with a minimum of three and a maximum of nine people. In 75 percent of the cases, the household heads were married and living with their spouses. While eight percent of the children reported widowed household heads, 17 percent were from households where the spouses were either legally or de facto separated or divorced. The type of household composition most often found in this group was simple single-nucleus (78%), followed by unrelated multi-nucleus composite household (8%), extended single-nucleus (7%), multi-nucleus extended (7%), and stem-extended (3%). The average annual household corporate income reported was about $16,202 a year, with a range of $5,028 to $29,640. When the size of the household is taken into consideration, the group had an average of $3,058 per capita annual income; ranging from $1,188 to $6,422.

Table 1 also revealed that the majority of the household heads associated with the respondents in the study tended to affiliate themselves with Khmer ancestor and god worship (86%); they described themselves as literate (81%), with 44 percent of them having completed elementary school, 25 percent junior high, and 8 percent high school. Most of them (97%) reported to have at least some knowledge of spoken English, but none of them claimed fluency. Concerning their economic

activities, almost half (44%) of the household heads were not employed while 50 percent were, and 6 percent reported as self-employed.

PHCSCS Total and Cluster Scores

The total and six cluster scores for the children were computed based on the procedures given in the PHCSCS Manual, with one minor adjustment: cases with any incomplete item were excluded from any analysis involving the total score (as suggested in the Manual), but were included in analyses using cluster scores that are not affected by the missing item. The averages and standard deviations of the total and cluster scores, as well as their intercorrelations, are presented in Table 2.

Inserted Table 2 about here

Only 31 children completed all the items in the PHCSCS, yielding an average total score of 49.8 out of a possible 80, and a standard deviation of 8.2. Compared with the statistics (Mean = 51.84, S.D. = 13.87, N = 1,183) of the normative sample given in the PHCSCS Manual (p. 50), the group in this study scored slightly lower, and was more homogeneous in its responses. Three cluster averages of this group: Behavior (11.7), Intellectual and School Status (11.7), and Physical Appearances (8.2), are similar to those reported in the Manual, where the corresponding scores are 11.44, 11.62, and 8.31 respectively (p. 51). On the other hand, the Anxiety

(7.5 c.f. 9.54), Popularity (6.1 c.f. 8.27), and Happiness and Satisfaction (7.0 c.f. 8.05) cluster scores of this group are considerably lower than those reported in the Manual. In comparison, the scores of this group show less variability; the standard deviations of the cluster scores range from 1.6 to 2.7, whereas the standard deviations reported in the Manual ranged from 2.04 to 3.57. The homogeneity of the scores of this group is also reflected in the comparatively lower intercorrelations among the scores. With the exception of the correlations between the Behavior cluster scores and the total, Anxiety, Popularity, and Happiness and Satisfaction scores, the score intercorrelations found in this study are generally lower than those reported in the PHCSCS manual.

Comparison with Children from other Ethnic Backgrounds

The findings reported in the Manual, as mentioned above, were not related to the ethnic background of the children tested. However, in investigating the self-concept of a group so different from the "mainstream", such as the children in this study, it would be of particular interest to compare them with those coming from similar backgrounds. A good opportunity for such comparisons is found in the Oanh and Michael (1977) study, where Vietnamese children were given the PHCSCS not too long after they had been resettled in the United States following experiences of war and turmoil in Southeast Asia. In this perspective, their background is most comparable to that of the Cambodian children in this study.

The number of cases and the means and standard deviations of the PHCSCS scores of the various ethnic groups (with the exception of the "others" group) were retrieved from Table 1 (p. 1010) in the Oanh and Michael (1977) report. Such information and the data from this study were submitted to a one way analysis of variance, and Table 3 presents the mean and standard deviation of each group, and the F-statistics.

Insert Table 3 about here

Table 3 shows that there is a significant difference in the total scores of the six groups of children [F (5,175) = 3.25, p <= .05]. To detect specific group differences, pair-wise comparisons were made between the scores of the Cambodian children and those of the Caucasian, Negro, Mexican-American, Asian (Non-Vietnamese), and Vietnamese children. Using Scheffe' test of significance for unequal n's (Edwards, 1985), it was found that the mean total score of the Negro children (61.39) is significantly higher than the mean score of the Cambodian children (49.81) [F(5,175) = 12.38, p <= .05]. Differences between the Cambodian children and children in any other ethnic groups were not statistically different.

Similar procedures were conducted for the six cluster scores. As revealed in Table 3, significant group differences were found in the Behavior cluster score [F(5,180) = 5.64, p <= .05], and the Scheffe follow-up test shows that the Asian children have a significantly higher mean score (15.17) than

the Cambodian children (11.69) [$F(5,180) = 26.81$, $p <= .05$].

The six groups scored differently in the Physical Appearances and Attributes cluster [$F(5,180) = 4.08$, $p <= .05$]. However, none of the pair-wise comparisons involving the Cambodian children were significant, indicating that the overall group difference is due to differences among the other groups.

For another cluster, Popularity, significant group differences were found [$F(5,179) = 3.21$, $p <= .05$], which, as indicated by the Scheffe follow-up test, can be attributed to the difference between the mean of the Cambodian (mean = 6.06) and Negro (mean = 8.83) children [$F(5,179) = 13.84$, $p <= .05$].

No significant group differences were found for the other clusters.

Self-Concept and Demographic Characteristics

It is also the intention of this study to find out whether there is any relationship between the children's demographic characteristics and their self-concept scores. For this purpose, bivariate correlations were computed between the total and clusters scores and the children's age, the number of their siblings, and the household income. The results are presented in Table 4.

Insert Table 4 about here

As seen in Table 4, only two correlations are statistically significant: between age and the Physical

Appearances and Attributes score ($r = -.43$, $N = 34$, $p = .005$), and between the household annual income and the Happiness and Satisfaction score ($r = .29$, $N = 33$, $p = .05$). It seems that younger children in this group had a better opinion of their physical appearances, as about 18 percent of the variations in the Physical Appearances scores can be explained by the children's age. The results also indicate a low relationship ($r^2 = .08$) between the children's score on the Happiness and Satisfaction cluster and the income of the household.

For categorical variables, another statistical procedure was employed to examine whether score differences are attributable to them. One-way analyses of variance were conducted on some demographic factors that may probably have influence on the children's self-concept scores: the grade level and gender of the children, their first language spoken, whether they are the eldest child or not, as well as the marital status, educational attainment, employment status of the household heads, and the types of household composition. Some variables, though of interest to the researcher, were not analyzed due to the fact that there is no, or very little, variability in their distribution, such as the ethnic affiliation of the children, whether they have experienced refugee camp life or not, and whether their household heads have ever used mental health services or not (see Table 1). Of all these analyses, only the one involving grade level and the Physical Appearances and Attributes score is statistically

significant [F(5,29) = 5.20, p = .002], indicating that there are differences among the children in different grade levels in their perception of their physical appearances. A follow-up test (Scheffe's method) revealed that the children in Grade 3 scored significantly lower (mean = 4.8) than those in Kindergarten (mean = 10.3) and Grade 1 (mean = 9.2).

Summary and Conclusion

About 40 children in a predominantly Cambodian community in southern Richmond were administered the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale in April, 1988, with the intention to find out how their unique experiences may have affected their self-concept.

The children in the study were five to fifteen years old, enrolled in kindergarten through the fifth grade. About fifty percent of them are boys; a similar proportion of them are the eldest among their siblings. They were either born in Cambodia or Thailand; implying that they have all lived in the southeast-Asian refugee camps before their families came to the United States. They all identified themselves as Khmer, and with the exception of three children who speak Thai, they all use Khmer as their first language at home. About three-quarters of these children are from "average" simple single-nucleus families, where the parents are married and living together with an average of about three children. The other twenty-five percent are from broken homes, living with kin,

due to the death, divorce or separation of their parents. About 80 percent of the household heads are literate, having received at least elementary schooling, and most of them know some spoken English, though none speaks it fluently. At the time of the survey, almost half of the household heads were unemployed. The average household annual income was only about $16,200, with an average per capita annual income of less than $3,100.

Compared with the findings reported in the PHCSCS Manual, the self-concept scores (the total and cluster scores) obtained by the children in this study appear to be a little low; more so in the clusters of Anxiety, Popularity, and Happiness and Satisfaction than in the others. Translated, this means that comparatively more children in this study might have responded "yes" to such items as: "I am shy", "I feel left out of things", "I get nervous when the teacher calls on me", "it is hard for me to make friends", and so forth. However, the observed differences have not been tested for statistical significance.

Findings in this study have been compared to those in Oanh and Michael (1977), with particular interest to see if the scores of the Cambodian children are any different from those obtained by the Vietnamese children reported in the latter study. In comparison, the children in the present study scored lower than the Oanh and Michael Black children in the Popularity cluster, and the Asian (Non-Vietnamese)

children in the Behavior cluster (Oanh & Michael, 1977, p. 1010). In that study, no group differences had been found for those two clusters; instead, the Vietnamese children were found to score the lowest among the groups in the Physical Appearances and Attributes cluster. Due to the fact that insufficient statistics are available in the findings report, no comparison can be made with Chang's study (1975) which also used the PHCSCS with Asian children.

Relationships between the self-concept and demographic characteristics of the children has been explored. A positive but very weak relationship is observed between the household income and the score in Happiness and Satisfaction, indicating that more children from financially better-off households would tend to admit they were happy and cheerful. However, since the shared variance between income and the cluster score is only eight percent and the data of only 33 children have been used, this relationship, though statistically significant, has to be interpreted with great care. Another significant relationship, slightly stronger but negative, was found between age and the Physical Appearance and Attributes cluster score. In this case, about 18 percent of the variance in the cluster score can be explained by the age of the children. As the correlation coefficient is negative, it indicates that older children are more critical of their appearances while younger children are comfortable with their looks, though why so is not obvious. One can only guess that

the growing up process may have rendered the older children to be more self conscious and hence less satisfied with their appearances. It would be interesting to follow-up on this finding to see if it also implies that the older children have become aware of the differences in the physical appearances and attributes between them and their non-Cambodian friends, and finding themselves smaller in build, have become less satisfied with their attributes. Similarly, when a one-way analysis of variance was conducted on the grade level of the children, it was found that the first graders and kindergartners scored high in the Physical Appearance cluster. As grade level correlates .91 with age for this group, it is logical to suggest that the presence and responses of younger children in this group have inflated this particular cluster score for the whole group, rendering it much higher (8.22 c.f. 5.77) than the corresponding mean score of the Vietnamese children reported in Oanh and Michael (1977). On the other hand, such differences may reflect more than sampling variances. As discussed in Rumbaut and Ima (1988), differences between Vietnamese and Cambodian refugee youth are real, substantial and culturally-rooted, although both groups experienced similar turmoil in Southeast Asia.

The inconsistency of young children's responses is suspected to have contributed partly to the low correlations found between self-concept and demographic characteristics in the present study. Another possible explanation is the

homogeneity of the group, both in their test scores and their demographic background, which is further jeopardized by the inclusion of siblings' data in the analyses. Given time, additional analyses with the age and sibling variables factored out should be conducted. However, the number of cases will be so much reduced that the analyses may not be meaningful.

It is therefore suggested that findings in this exploratory study should be confirmed with a broader data base of more Cambodian children in Grade 3 or above, preferably collected in the neighboring areas in the future. In addition, with a larger sample, multivariate statistical procedures can be employed for further interesting and sophisticated analyses and tests of hypotheses.

Though not highly feasible, it is also recommended that, for further studies, additional data be collected through interviews with the Cambodian children and their parents and teachers. Together with the quantitative data obtained with the PHCSCS, the qualitative information collected in this way will provide a more rounded perspective in the understanding of these children. In addition, such information can also serve as a validation criterion for the PHCSCS used with ethnic groups, since nuances in the language as used in the instrument may be lost or misinterpreted by those unfamiliar with the American culture.

It has been found that the Cambodian children in this

study had lower self-concept scores as compared with those reported in the PHCSCS manual (Piers, 1984) and Oanh and Michael (1977), especially in the areas of anxiety, popularity, and happiness and satisfaction. Although the differences have not been statistically tested, and may happen by chance, they are, albeit, warning signs to those who work with the children and their families that something is amiss, that the children are experiencing feelings of helplessness, isolation, anxiety and perhaps, loss, in their struggles to fit in a new world and to adapt to a new way of life. It is worthwhile to follow up on this issue, to verify the feelings of the children, and to provide suitable counseling and assistance if the need arises.

In the course of conducting this study, it was found that the Cambodian children did not have any achievement test results. With due respect to the decision-makers in this matter and full agreement with the opinion that standardized tests will penalize the Cambodian children for their problems with the English language, it is felt that the diagnostic use of achievement tests does not necessarily traumatize or stigmatize them, and may actually be helpful in assessing their strengths and weaknesses and in monitoring their scholastic progress. If the use of existing standardized tests is felt absolutely inappropriate, the possibility of developing language appropriate tests for these children should be investigated.

It is obvious that Cambodian children recovering from experiences of wars and refugee life, and some struggling to survive broken homes and economical underprivilege, are handicapped in many ways. If their needs and problems can be identified early, it is hoped that timely service provision and problem solution may alleviate the difficulties they already have in their adjustment to a new environment and adoption of a new culture, thus allowing them a better chance to fully develop their potential. The present study is only the very first attempt in this direction; further efforts are very much needed.

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Table 1 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents to the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale

	Frequency	Percent
ALL RESPONDENTS[3]	36	100.0
Grade		
Kindergarten	6	16.7
Grade 1	14	38.9
Grade 2	4	11.1
Grade 3	5	13.9
Grade 4	4	11.1
Grade 5	3	8.3
Gender		
Male	19	52.8
Female	17	47.2
Eldest among Siblings	17	47.2
Place of Birth		
United States	0	0.0
Cambodia	17	47.2
Thailand	19	52.8
Ethnic Affiliation		
Khmer	36	100.0
Chinese Kin Relations		
Not related	15	41.7
One Paternal grandparent Chinese	1	2.8
Two or more grandparents Chinese	2	5.6
Distant relative	18	50.0
First Language Spoken at Home		
Khmer	33	91.7
Thai	3	8.3
First Language Household Head Speaks at Home		
Khmer	34	94.4
Chinese (Cantonese)	1	2.8
Mute	1	2.8

[3]Excluding one child whose demographic information is not available.

(Table 1 continued)

	Frequency	Percent
ALL RESPONDENTS	36	100.0
Marital Status of Household Head		
Married, living with spouse	27	75.0
Legally separated or divorced	4	11.1
Widowed	3	8.3
De facto separated or divorced by choice	2	5.6
Religious affiliation of Household Head		
Khmer ancestor and god worship	31	86.1
Catholic	4	11.1
Orthodox Buddhist	1	2.8
Household Head Literate	29	80.6
Educational Attainment of Household Head		
No Schooling	8	22.2
Grade 1 through Grade 5	16	44.4
Grade 6 through Grade 8	9	25.0
Grade 9 through Grade 12	3	8.3
Spoken English Fluency of Household Head		
Does not know English	1	2.8
Knows a little bit	23	63.9
Ordinary	12	33.3
Employment Status of Household Head		
Not employed	16	44.4
Self-employed	2	5.6
Employee	18	50.0
Household Head Ever Used Mental Health Services	1	2.8
Household Composition		
Simple single-nucleus	28	77.8
Extended single-nucleus	2	5.6
Multi-nucleus extended	2	5.6
Stem-extended	1	2.8
Unrelated multi-nucleus composite	3	8.3

	N	Mean	S.D.	Min	Max
Age (in month)	35	107.9	28.3	62	169
Number of siblings	36	3.4	1.2	1	6
Family size	36	5.5	1.5	3	9
Household corporate income	33	16202.2	7100.4	5028	29640
Income per capita	33	3058.7	1405.0	1189	6422

Table 2 **Averages and Intercorrelations of Total and Cluster Scores**

Score	N	Mean	S.D.	Correlations					
				BEH	INT	PHY	ANX	POP	HAP
TOTAL	31	49.8	8.2	.73*	.56*	.62*	.65*	.63*	.59*
BEH	36	11.7	2.6		.30*	.14	.35*	.32*	.34*
INT	36	11.7	2.5			.26	.37*	.15	.05
PHY	36	8.2	2.7				.04	.44*	.45*
ANX	36	7.5	2.5					.29*	.34*
POP	35	6.1	2.0						.33*
HAP	37	7.0	1.6						

* p <= .05

Table 3 Comparison of the Self-Concept Scores of Children in this Study with the Findings Reported in Danh and Michael (1977)

	From Danh & Michael (1977)[1]								
	Caucasian	Negro	Mexican	Asian	Vietnam	Cambodian	All Groups	Computed F	Degrees of Freedom
Total Score (item = 80)								3.25 *	(5,175)
N	30	18	30	46	26	21	181		
Mean	54.47	61.39	53.43	57.26	52.69	49.81	54.63		
S.D.	13.83	7.76	13.49	10.21	11.04	8.18			
Behavior (item = 16)								5.64 *	(5,180)
N	30	18	30	46	26	36	186		
Mean	13.23	14.17	13.13	15.17	13.69	11.69	13.98		
S.D.	4.00	3.09	3.41	2.38	2.71	2.65			
Intellectual and School Status (item = 17)								1.21	(5,180)
N	30	18	30	46	26	36	186		
Mean	11.07	13.22	10.87	12.07	11.73	11.69	11.85		
S.D.	4.34	3.37	4.56	3.59	3.70	2.52			
Physical Appearances and Attributes (item = 13)								4.08 *	(5,180)
N	30	18	30	46	26	36	186		
Mean	7.40	8.89	6.40	6.22	5.77	8.22	7.02		
S.D.	3.17	2.35	2.95	3.17	3.01	2.70			
Anxiety (item = 14)								0.61	(5,180)
N	30	18	30	46	26	36	186		
Mean	7.33	8.44	8.00	8.04	7.46	7.47	7.93		
S.D.	2.66	2.33	2.73	1.75	2.79	2.53			
Popularity (item = 12)								2.1 *	(5,174)
N	30	18	30	46	26	35	185		
Mean	7.77	8.83	7.00	7.39	7.15	6.06	7.34		
S.D.	2.80	2.71	2.91	2.56	2.29	2.09			
Happiness and Satisfaction (item = 10)								1.13	(5,181)
N	30	18	30	46	26	37	187		
Mean	7.03	7.61	7.00	7.24	6.38	6.97	7.07		
S.D.	1.96	1.38	2.08	1.99	1.79	1.55			

* p <= .05

[1] Danh, N. T., & Michael, W. B. (1977). The predictive validity of each of ten measures of self-concept relative to teachers' ratings of achievement in Mathematics and Reading of Vietnamese children and of those from five other ethnic groups. Educational and Psychological Measurements, 37, p 1010.

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Table 4 Correlations between Self-Concept Scores and Selected Demographic Variables

	TOTAL	BEH	INT	PHY	ANX	POP	HAP
Age	-.20	-.01	-.26	-.43*	.05	-.09	.09
	(30)	(34)	(34)	(34)	(35)	(33)	(35)
Household income	-.13	-.07	-.24	-.16	.11	.12	.29*
	(27)	(32)	(32)	(32)	(32)	(31)	(33)
Number of siblings	.01	.01	.09	.01	-.04	.18	-.17
	(30)	(35)	(35)	(35)	(35)	(34)	(36)

Note: Numbers of cases are given in parentheses.

* denotes p <= .05